

SOLOMON ISLANDS

2021

**TOBACCO
INDUSTRY
INTERFERENCE
INDEX**

Introduction

Solomon Islands, with a population of about 650,000 people, has one of the highest smoking prevalence rates in the world, particularly among youth. More than 810 children (10-14 years old) and 67,620 adults (15+ years old) continue to use tobacco each day.

Solomon Islands has been a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) since 2004. According to the Director, non-communicable diseases and tobacco control focal person within the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), action to implement WHO FCTC Article 5.3, has not taken place because of a lack of commitment and political will to do so. The MHMS responsibilities to implement and enforce the Tobacco Control Act are yet to be carried out in full because of the above stated reasons. Moreover, a major loophole within the current Act is that there is no limit set on the number of companies that can apply for and obtain a manufacturing or importer's license despite our small population and the health risks imposed by the actions of so many such tobacco companies.

Despite the commitment of a handful of individuals both from within the MHMS and non-state actor organizations to implement WHO FCTC and the Tobacco Control Act, most government officials and parliamentarians are still not aware of WHO FCTC and many of its provisions.

This point was duly noted during several tobacco control advocacy and awareness activities lead by the MHMS' Tobacco Control Technical Advisory Group (TCTAG) in cooperation with the executive government caucus and cabinet members within the Office of the Prime Minister in 2018 and 2019. TCTAG is tasked to raise awareness on both the Tobacco Control Act 2010 and WHO FCTC Article 5.3.

Part 2, Section 4 of the Tobacco Control Act 2010 sets out a strong provision to ban tobacco advertising. However, the ban does not include corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the tobacco industry continues to reach out to the broader community through CSR and philanthropy activities.

The current heavy commitment and engagement by MHMS staff in the current effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 has halted the overall effort to advance the cabinet paper overhauling the Tobacco Control Act. This would expand the ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship to cover all forms of advertising or promotion through any direct or indirect and includes CSR activities.

Currently, there are three main tobacco companies in Solomon Islands, namely: (1) Solomon Islands Tobacco Company Ltd. (SITC), a subsidiary of British American Tobacco (BAT); (2) Solomon Sun Cigarette Company, a co-shared company owned by a Chinese naturalized citizen and former member of the parliament; and (3) Oceanic Oasis, a Chinese-owned cigarette importing company. Altogether, they control 98 percent of the cigarette market in the country.

The most popular imported brand is BAT's Pall Mall. Solomon Islands has not banned smoking in universities, government facilities, indoor offices, restaurants, pubs, and bars.

There is no concrete plan on allowing or disallowing sale of electronic cigarettes in the country.

Building on the 2020 report, it's clear that Solomon Islands has much work to do in order to increase compliance with Article 5.3. The 2021 score rating of 63 shows a deterioration compared to 49 points in 2020 draws attention to the fact that much needs to be done by all SIG sectors, most especially the MHMS as the custodian and focal government ministry responsible for implementing and enforcing the Tobacco Control Act of 2010 and the FCTC.

Summary Findings

I. INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

On 15 July, 2020 in Honiara, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Honorable Prime Minister and the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI). The SITC-BAT is a major key stakeholder of SICCI, and their CEO is a member of SICCI Executive and an influencer representing the private sector interest in the country. This MOU is indeed a massive setback.

The official arrangement and structural text of the MOU has given the SITC-BAT an entrance and leverage into the system and intelligence apparatus of the Solomon Islands government (SIG) machinery thus giving them direct proximity to influence policy.

Solomon Islands has not maintained a direct involvement or participation from the tobacco industry to policy development or implementation. In spite of this, the tobacco industry seems to have a strong foothold in policymaking with the MOU being recently signed thus creating a functional space for endless avalanche of lobbying and deceptive tactics to flourish.

2. INDUSTRY CSR ACTIVITIES

No doubt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the number one tool and tactic that the industry has used to date to advance its cause and hidden strategic agenda especially on the political front.

Political instability and the constant change of political leadership is one of the core reasons why it's difficult to get the message of Article 5.3 to politicians in spite of the several efforts made with the caucus through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

As alluded to and reported by the director, Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MFT), the current government has an open policy to any CSR project initiatives taken by the industry to aid politicians and their respective constituencies. According to the director MFT, CSR is a positive contribution - the industry can give back and invest in the broader community. Such an open hand policy approach taken by the current government demonstrates the need for a speedy and comprehensive effort championed by the Tobacco Control Unit through the Ministry of Health and Medical Service (MHMS). One of the positive ways forward that should be of high priority is to accelerate the passage of the recommendations tabulated in drafting instructions to the current Act, which should include guidelines that are directly extracted from FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines.

Additionally according to the director MFT, CSR seed money cap given and allotted to members of parliament from SITC-BAT sits at SBD 100,000(USD 12,525).

There is an urgent need to denormalize and regulate activities described by the tobacco industry as socially responsible.

3. BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

The MOU signed by the Honorable Prime Minister on the 15th of July 2020 in Honiara with SICCI for which the SITC-BAT is a sitting Executive member, is a massive setback which gives the industry a huge leverage in terms of affecting the current government policy strands as explicitly stipulated in narration of the MOU. The MOU: Manufacturing Industry Working Group (MIWG) includes Solomon Island Tobacco Co (SITCO) as a member

The MOU will give the tobacco industry free access to any government line ministries especially the ones that are of interest and value to them, such as MFT, Customs Department, and Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration (MCILI). Until the current Tobacco Control Act undergoes a holistic and thorough review to address this, it will remain a challenge and problem for some time to come.

4. UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

It's obvious that much needs to be done in terms of developing a consistent comprehensive advocacy program to heighten SIG high ranking officials, politicians, Ministers of the Crown on the WHO FCTC and Article 5.3.

Whilst the Permanent Secretary and Honorable Minister of MHMS have made some bold and courageous stands to cut all connections made with the industry after they were briefed on FCTC Article 5.3, more needs to be done.

5. TRANSPARENCY

It is clear that those working within all branches of government do not hold the tobacco industry accountable. Records of meetings and interaction of government officials with the tobacco industry are not made accessible to the public. There is a need for clear policies and guidelines on avoidance of conflict of interest for government officials, employees and consultants.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Solomon Islands Political Party Integrity Bill of 2014, Section 57 made a provision for disclosure of campaign funds post-election, but it does not cover nor prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns and to seek full disclosure of such contributions from them during or prior to election. Nearly all government ministers and parliamentarians have had projects funded by the tobacco industry.

7. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The current Tobacco Control Act does not have any provision addressing tobacco industry interference. In the current undertaking championed by the MHMS, a comprehensive drafting instruction is underway to review the Act. Under Area 14 – Industry interference, the MHMS realized that the tobacco industry uses their economic power, marketing and lobbying to discredit research and influence decision-makers to promote the sale and distribution of tobacco products. The current review will make provision for inclusion of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 principle guidelines to be part of the structural formation of the Tobacco Control Act.

Recommendations

1. Raise awareness of WHO FCTC and specifically Article 5.3 within the whole of government machinery starting from the Office of the Prime Minister and the Caucus. Substantive support and resources will be needed to advance this awareness raising.
2. Establish a permanent and fully funded taskforce that should include both SIG and non state actors and should be incorporated within the structure and operation of the MHMS. The taskforce would be set up to oversee the implementation of Article 5.3. Prevention of tobacco industry interference must also be enshrined as one of the priority agenda items to be built into the host of recommendations as part of the review of the current Tobacco Control Act.
3. Conduct a thorough appraisal of the country's compliance with Article 5.3. The findings of this report should provide useful information.
4. Draft guidelines and steps to prevent interference by the tobacco industry in public health policies relating to tobacco control. This set of guidelines should be incorporated into the public service General Order (GO) as well as in the Tobacco Control Act.
5. Incorporate Article 5.3 into the International Public Service Administration (IPAM) where all public servants undergo induction and progressive Public Service training.
6. Establish an overarching national standard guideline procedure or code of conduct to uphold the rule of transparency when government officials interact with the industry. This must include records of all interactions, standards of conduct for dealing with the industry.
7. Prohibit and regulate tobacco industry contributions to politicians.
8. Prohibit all tobacco industry CSR donations, sponsorships and funding assistance.
9. Protect tobacco control policies from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

2021 Tobacco Industry Interference Index

Results and Findings

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INDICATOR I: Level of Industry Participation in Policy-Development						
I. The government ¹ accepts, supports or endorses any offer for assistance by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry ² in setting or implementing public health policies in relation to tobacco control ³ (Rec 3.1)						
There is no incident found or cited in 2020-2021.						
2. The government accepts, supports or endorses <u>policies or legislation drafted</u> by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry. (Rec 3.4)						
<p>There is no publicly available evidence of such interaction or undertaking in recent times. However, as reported in the 2020 Tobacco Industry Interference and findings, there is continuous evidence that tobacco industry has subtly and deceptively been gaining leverage and creating a stronghold within the Solomon Islands Government System. This is well recognised by the Permanent Secretary (PS) of Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration (MCILI). In his assertion, the PS MCILI stated that under the recent government redirection policy framework, championed by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), a Solomon Islands Government (SIG) and Private Sector Advisory Group (SIG-PSAG) was established. SIG-PSAG is a functional group that is coordinated and chaired by the Permanent Secretary MCILI. The secretariat of SIG-PSAG is being allotted to Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), which the industry is a huge influencer and a big player. This provides the industry a direct foothold within the apparatus of the government system.</p> <p>Information gathered from officials within the OPM, MCILI, Finance and Treasury (MFT) (that includes the Customs Division), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MFAET), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) confirm that the industry has been conducting frequent visits and meetings with them on matters that concern their business.</p>						
3. The government allows/invites the tobacco industry to sit in government interagency/ multi-sectoral committee/ advisory group body that sets public health policy. (Rec 4.8)						
The tobacco industry does not have a direct seat in any of the committee that sets public health policy in the country. Even though this doesn't exist in a direct form with MHMS,						

¹ The term “government” refers to any public official whether or not acting within the scope of authority as long as cloaked with such authority or holding out to another as having such authority

² The term, “tobacco industry’ includes those representing its interests or working to further its interests, including the State-owned tobacco industry.

³ “Offer of assistance” may include draft legislation, technical input, recommendations, overseas study tour

its arm of influence is gaining momentum with other government line ministries within the SIG machinery. The industry is well represented through the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), which is the overarching body coordinating the interest of private sector to the Solomon Islands government. Such arrangements are vigorously used by the industry as a platform to channel and advocate for their interest areas. Interviews with both the PS MCILI and the Director Economic Reform within the MFT revealed that the industry sits in directly as an official of SICCI in both SIG-PSAG and in a working sub-committee in the area of manufacturing. This gives them access and leverage to make direct requests on specific areas that would be of great interest to them.

The SICCI in a statement in September 2020 stated, “We recognize that Government has limited resources so we would like to see how SICCI can work with Government to introduce capabilities and programs that could support enforcement.” The SICCI was persuading the government to engage in public-private partnership.⁴ In June the SICCI convened a Roundtable attended by senior government officials from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour and Immigration and the Prime Minister’s Office and Director of the Economic Reform Unit, reporting, “another important aspect of the roundtable discussions was how the Government can be the best enabler for private sector growth.”⁵

4. The government nominates or allows representatives from the tobacco industry (including State-owned) in the delegation to the COP or other subsidiary bodies or accepts their sponsorship for delegates. (i.e. COP 4 & 5, INB 4 5, WG) ⁶ (Rec 4.9 & 8.3)							
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The government does not allow or include representatives from the industry in the delegation to either the COP or any of its related meetings.

INDICATOR 2: Industry CSR activities

5. A. The government agencies or its officials endorses, supports, forms partnerships with or participates in so-called CSR activities organized by the tobacco industry. (Rec 6.2)								5
B. The government (its agencies and officials) receives contributions ⁷ (monetary or otherwise) from the tobacco industry (including so-called CSR contributions). (Rec 6.4)								

Whilst there is no direct official endorsement, support or any form of partnership framework in terms of policy direction that is sealed between the industry and SIG to engage in any sort of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communal outreach or services with the industry, it is obvious that both the previous out going Executive SIG and the current one, still do have an open relationship with the industry where officials

⁴Solomonchamber.com. <https://www.solomonchamber.com.sb/news-reports/posts/2020/september/lack-of-compliance-is-affecting-business-confidence-and-reduces-govt-revenue/> (<https://bit.ly/3fUau2e>)

⁵ Notify. SICCI roundtable highlights opportunities for raising government revenue from businesses. 4 June 2020 <https://www.notify.com.sb/news/sicci-roundtable-highlights-opportunities-for-raising-government-revenue-from-businesses>

⁶Please annex a list since 2009 so that the respondent can quantify the frequency, <http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/en/>

⁷political, social financial, educations, community, technical expertise or training to counter smuggling or any other forms of contributions

like parliamentarians can liaise and directly apply for community funding support. The ceiling cap of funding support as seed money given to constituencies through members of parliament and those who successful applied as revealed by the Director Economic Reform within the MFT is about 100,000 (SBD).

According to information supplied by the Director MFT, the industry is currently aiding and supporting community development initiative programs mainly in the area of water supply which include water tanks.

A recent revelation made by one of the persons who used to work with the industry within the public liaising department, is that SITC-BAT is now using terms like Corporate Social Investment (CSI) instead of CSR. This again is a rebranding strategy the industry is using to reinvent their social standing strategy with both SIG and the broader community. Noting and realizing that there is a Tobacco Control Technical Advisory Group (TCTAG) established within the MHMS that is tracking all activities of the industry, they are now very cautious on what is coming out in the public media space, social media platforms and even what is posted on their websites.

INDICATOR 3: Benefits to the Tobacco Industry

6. The government accommodates requests from the tobacco industry for a longer time frame for implementation or postponement of tobacco control law. (e.g. 180 days is common for PHW, Tax increase can be implemented within 1 month) (Rec 7.1)							3	
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There is no record of the industry engaging in a subversion strategy to postpone any major policy initiative, legislation or regulation championed by the SIG. Even though this is the case, it is good to keep on high radar alert knowing very well that the industry as one of its core deceptive strategies is using SICCI as one of their front advocacy groups. They are very successful in advancing their mandate through SICCI a medium that SIG normally had convergence with as the overarching body representing the private sector enterprise.

In the recent parliamentary sitting to vet the 2020 – 2021 appropriate supplementary budget, the Minister of Finance announced that his ministry is in the process to increase tax on all sweet beverage imported goods and tobacco. The announcement got the industry mounting a response tactic through their public liaison team to halt or slow down the initiative by trying to make appointments to see all relevant SIG ministries that would advance this cause, including MHMS. This is reported by the Director NCD and Focal person on Tobacco Control within the MHMS.

7. The government gives privileges, incentives, exemptions or benefits to the tobacco industry (Rec 7.3)					3		
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According to information asserted by the Director Economic Reform within the MFT, the industry is given the privilege on input under manufacturing incentives on all raw imported products, including its associated ingredients. The arrangement is such that both goods taxes and customs excise duty will be imposed on the final processed manufactured

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products. This is an incentive given to all manufacturing enterprises in general which the industry took advantage of.

Under the manufacturing incentive both SITC-BAT and other competing companies benefited a lot from the tax incentives that cover components like machinery and equipment to aid their manufacturing capabilities.

Cigarettes did not become less affordable over the past years. A packet of cigarettes sells for 25 SDB (approximately USD 3.13). This is very affordable for the common people, thus generating massive attraction for new smokers especially children and youth.

International or transit passengers can import 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco duty free into Solomon Islands.

INDICATOR 4: Forms of Unnecessary Interaction

8. Top level government officials (such as President/ Prime Minister or Minister⁸) meet with/ foster relations with the tobacco companies such as attending social functions and other events sponsored or organized by the tobacco companies or those furthering its interests. (Rec 2.1)

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The continuous interaction between the industry and SIG officials, which include officials from the Office of the Prime Minister and other government line ministries is a huge problem and massive setback for public health. The highly charged environment of corruption with SIG ministries is a major factor.

Both the Director Non Communicable Disease (NCD) and the focal person for Tobacco Control, Director Economic Reform within the MFT and PS MCILI acknowledge that the Tobacco industry has direct leverage to the key stakeholders from nearly all SIG Ministries that are of interest to them.

According to insight given by the Director Economic Reform MFT, their very own minister was the guest of honor in the official launching of a new manufacturing wing of a “a roll your own” tobacco product constructed by the SITC-BAT.

Most of the SIG Permanent Secretaries were provided a pdf e-copy of the Results and Findings of the 2020 Tobacco Industry Interference Index that helped to raise some sort of consciousness and understanding on this issue and the Solomon Islands commitments and obligations to the FCTC. However, because they are politically appointed to their respective posts, they couldn't make an upright stand on such a matter.

9. The government accepts assistance/ offers of assistance from the tobacco industry on enforcement such as conducting raids on tobacco smuggling or enforcing smoke free policies or no sales to minors. (including monetary contribution for these activities) (Rec 4.3)

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⁸Includes immediate members of the families of the high-level officials

According to information from the Director Reform Unit MFT which was affirmed by the deputy Customs Comptroller, both acknowledge that the SITC-BAT insisted that an illicit tobacco smuggling coordinating committee be established that should interface with key SIG Ministries including MFT, Customs, MFET, MCILI and Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF). According to the Director Reform Unit MFT, the coordinating committee would be good for the country, noting that there are illicit tobacco products passing through the different portal entry points going straight into the public domain and consumer market that escape goods taxes and customs excise duty as imposed by SIG. According to Director Reform Unit MFT, the idea to form the illicit tobacco smuggling coordinating committee is still in the discussion phase.

10. The government accepts, supports, endorses, or enters into partnerships or agreements with the tobacco industry. (Rec 3.1) NOTE: This must <u>not</u> involve CSR, enforcement activity, or tobacco control policy development since these are already covered in the previous questions.						3	
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An MOU was signed between SICCI and the Government represented by the Ministries of Commerce, of Finance, of National Planning, and the Prime Minister's Office⁹ in which SITC-BAT is a core Executive member who already has direct access to whatever suggestions, recommendations and resolutions, they so desire. The MOU will enable the SICCI to advise the government. A taskforce was formed to ensure that business compliance is monitored with regular review and reporting. The General Manager of SITCO is heading up the Manufacturing Industry Working Group (MIWG). In July the MIWG gave an update on progress to the Prime Minister.¹⁰

During the post discussion made with the PS MCILI, he supplied a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed by the Prime Minister on the 15th July 2020 between SIG and SICCI that seeks to establish an advisory group between SIG and SICCI. The establishment of the advisory group is established to entail the following expectations:

- Providing a forum for dialogue on matters relating to private public partnership opportunities in the Solomon Islands.
- Recommending policy direction on areas of mutual interest.
- Recommending legislative initiative for full effecting identified private public partnership opportunities.
- Advising government and private sectors on matters related and or incidental to the development of any public private partnership regime.

⁹ Solomonchamber.com. <https://www.solomonchamber.com.sb/news-reports/posts/2020/september/lack-of-compliance-is-affecting-business-confidence-and-reduces-gov-t-revenue/>

¹⁰Solomonislandsherald.com.SICCI updates PM on recently established working groups. 30 July 2020
<https://solomonislandsherald.com/sicci-updates-pm-on-recently-established-working-groups/>



SICCI Roundtable Highlights Opportunities for Raising Government Revenue from Businesses, Kazi Mushfiqur Rahman General Manager of SITC-BAT marked in yellow cycle.



New SICCI Board

The newly elected SICCI Board and CEO. (Front row) Qila Tuhanuku, Chairman Ricky Fuo'o and CEO Natalina Hong. (Back row) Kazi Mushfiqur Rahman, Bob Pollard, Craig Gibsone, Namoi Kaluae and Daniel Tucker. Missing is Frank Wickham.¹¹

¹¹<https://www.solomontimes.com/news/fuo-heads-new-sicci-board/10730>

The SICCI also signed an MOU with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF). By November 2020, there had been four SICCI/RSIPF Executive Group meetings held. While actual details of the MOU are not available, according one news report, the discussions at the Executive meeting in November “focused on establishing an essential services list of businesses and the process of better managing necessary exemptions for businesses during an event of a lockdown due to the current COVID-19 situation.”¹² Tobacco business continued during the pandemic.

INDICATOR 5: Transparency

11. The government does not publicly disclose meetings/ interactions with the tobacco industry in cases where such interactions are strictly necessary for regulation. (Rec 2.2)										5
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This is an area that is most often violated by SIG being a party to FCTC and in particular Article 5.3.

The practicing trend as indicated by government officials from across the SIG ministries including: MHMS, MFT, MFET and MCILI, is that there is no public disclosure of meetings, interactions, minutes and resolutions held with the tobacco industry even though matters discussed would have implications for public health and are not in compliance with commitments to the FCTC. For example, in July 2020, SICCI made a courtesy call to the Prime Minister and his senior staff to present problems faced by business because of the pandemic. SITCO’s General Manager was represented in that meeting. The meeting was reported on the FaceBook of the SICCI after it happened. They had discussed barriers to the business growth in the country and how to address the hardship faced by the businesses.¹³



¹²Solomon Star. SICCI acknowledges RSIPF support to our frontline workers. 3 Nov 2020

<https://www.solomonstarnews.com/index.php/news/national/item/24404-sicci-acknowledges-rsipf-s-support-to-our-frontline-workers>

¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/SolomonIslandsChamberofCommerceandIndustry/posts/3102612839835574>

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12. The government requires rules for the disclosure or registration of tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations, and individuals acting on their behalf including lobbyists (Rec 5.3)						5
The SICCI is the key lobby group that acted as the concerted and collaborative body that speaks up on behalf of businesses, and utilized by the industry especially SITC-BAT. Their assigned personnel are well known to all the SIG line ministries for their lobbying skills. This plays well to their advantage since there is no explicit legal rules and commitment to hold them accountable from the current Act.						
The industry is tactical in engaging an established executive government only when they realize a government is being formed and is ready to govern post national general election session. Additionally, the constitutional right given to members of parliament to shift political party affiliation and allegiance and the leverage given to them to act on the best wishes of their electorate is indeed an opening that the SITC-BAT would capitalize much on in terms of support with small seed grants under the guise of CSR or as preferred by them to be called CSI (corporate social investment).						
To date there are no rules for the disclosure or registration of tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations, and individuals acting on their behalf including their lobbyists. More effort needs to be expended to address this particular area of concern.						
INDICATOR 6: Conflict of Interest						
13. The government does not prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns or to require full disclosure of such contributions. (Rec 4.11)						4
Solomon Islands Political Party Integrity Bill of 2014, Section 57 made a provision to cater for disclosure of campaign funds post-election, but it does not cover nor prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry specifically to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns and to seek full disclosure of such contributions from them during or prior to election.						
14. Retired senior government officials form part of the tobacco industry (former Prime Minister, Minister, Attorney General) (Rec 4.4)					3	
Yes, there was a retired high ranking official that used to serve within the OPM that is currently employed by SICTC.						
15. <u>Current government officials</u> and relatives hold positions in the tobacco business including consultancy positions. (Rec 4.5, 4.8, 4.10)	0					
There has been no record of current government officials and relatives holding position in tobacco business.						

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INDICATOR 7: Preventive Measures						
16. The government has put in place a procedure for disclosing the records of the interaction (such as agenda, attendees, minutes and outcome) with the tobacco industry and its representatives. (Rec 5.1)				3		
Success has been made to build and adapt WHO FCTC Article 5.3 and its core supportive guidelines direct into the draft review of the Tobacco Control Act. This review should be submitted to Attorney General Chamber for their input and final tabulation before ascending it to the caucus and cabinet. Progress has been halted because of the COVID19 strain on the SIG public service machinery.						
17. The government has formulated, adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards with which they should comply in their dealings with the tobacco industry. (Rec 4.2)				3		
The government has not formulated, nor adopted or implemented a code of conduct for public officials in prescribing the standards in which they should comply or subject their dealings with the tobacco industry. The SIG General Order (GO) for public servants in terms of conduct and standards is a bit generic at the moment and nothing has been specifically codified for tobacco. The biggest hope going forward is inclusion of provisions and guidelines of Article 5.3 direct into the current Tobacco Control Act. This would directly hold the politicians and the entire public service machinery accountable.						
18. The government requires the tobacco industry to periodically submit information on tobacco production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues and any other activity, including lobbying, philanthropy, political contributions and all other activities. (5.2)					4	
The role of the SIG through the MHMS as the focal Ministry to demand the tobacco industry to periodically submit information on tobacco production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues and any other activity, including lobbying, philanthropy, political contributions and all other activities is restricted to the provision of the current Tobacco Control Act, which only calls for a report on the constituents of the cigarette products.						
The above information is enlisted amongst a host of specific areas and recommendation to be included in the current review made on the current Tobacco Control Act, which is still with the Attorney General Chamber.						
19. The government has a program / system/ plan to consistently ¹⁴ raise awareness within its departments on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines. (Rec 1.1, 1.2)			2			

¹⁴ For purposes of this question, “consistently” means: a. Each time the FCTC is discussed, 5.3 is explained. AND b. Whenever the opportunity arises such when the tobacco industry intervention is discovered or reported.

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The TCTAG, the technical advisory unit for tobacco control with MHMS, has been tasked to sensitize all government line ministries and other stakeholders including Executive Government on WHO FCTC and Article 5.3. As it stands, a lot of SIG ministry and top officials are still unaware of their obligations under the WHO FCTC and Article 5.3.

20. The government has put in place a policy to disallow the acceptance of all forms of contributions/ gifts from the tobacco industry (monetary or otherwise) including offers of assistance, policy drafts, or study visit invitations given or offered to the government, its agencies, officials and their relatives. (3.4)

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As it stands the government has not put in place a policy to disallow the acceptance of all forms of contributions or gifts from the tobacco industry. There are standard guidelines available to public servants that include a service code of conduct under the General Order, but it is still very generic and does not specify tobacco related matters and the industry.

TOTAL	63
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ANNEX A: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

TOBACCO INDUSTRY ACTIVITY

LOCAL TOBACCO COMPANIES

Top 5 Tobacco Companies/distributors	Market Share and Brands	Source
(1) Solomon Islands Tobacco Company Ltd. (SITC), a subsidiary of British American Tobacco (BAT);	Market Share cannot be ascertained or established	Web site is tightly controlled
(2) Solomon Sun Cigarette Company, a co-shared company owned by a Chinese naturalized citizen and former member of the parliament;	Market Share cannot be ascertained or established	No web site or web page
(3) Oceanic Oasis, a Chinese-owned cigarette importing company. Altogether, they control 98 percent of the cigarette market in the country.	Market Share cannot be ascertained or established	No web site or web page

TOBACCO INDUSTRY FRONT GROUPS

Top 5 Tobacco Industry Representative	Type (Front Group/ Affiliate/ Individual)	URL
SICCI	Core group representing the private business Sector	Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry: https://www.solomonchamber.com.sb

NEWS SOURCES

Top 5 Newspaper/Dailies	Type (Print/Online)	URL
SICCI website	online	https://www.solomonchamber.com.sb/news
Solomon Times website	online	https://www.solomontimes.com/news